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Chapter 1

Beginnings

"be informed that i came to get acquainted with the country"

In the summer of 1685, 250 riders escorting a pack train left the young town of Charleston in the province of South Carolina and headed up-country. They were led by an experienced and intrepid English frontiersman, Dr. Henry Woodward (c. 1646–c. 1686): physician, adventurer, agent of empire. Woodward and his men had a long way to go, through the watery, fever-ridden Low Country and the featureless pine barrens beyond, into the hills of the Piedmont, described over a century later as enjoying a "free, open air." They forded the Savannah River and kept heading west through the present state of Georgia and forded in succession the Ogeechee, Oconee, Ocmulgee, and Flint Rivers. They had been in Indian country since early in their journey, but they made no attempt to hide their presence. The packhorses had bells on their tack, so the handlers could more easily round them up every morning. To the continual ringing of the bells and cracking of whips and whooping and hollering, the riders pushed on, their destination the great Lower Creek town of Coweta in modern Russell County, Alabama, near the falls of the Chattahoochee River.[1]

The great naturalist William Bartram, traveling the Creek country of south-central Alabama with a pack train in November 1777, left us a vivid picture of a centuries-old scene of pandemonium now out of memory. Bartram thought his old horse "would give up," especially when he discovered what he considered the "mad manner" in which the traders traveled. "They seldom decamp until the sun is high and hot; each one having a whip made of the toughest cow-skin, they start all at once, the horses having ranged themselves in regular Indian file . . . then the chief drives with the crack of his whip, and a whoop or shriek, which rings through the forests and plains . . . which is repeated by all the company, when we start at once, keeping up a brisk and constant trot, which is incessantly urged and continued as long as these miserable creatures are able to move forward. . . . The constant ringing

and clattering of the bells, smacking of the whips, whooping and too frequent cursing these miserable quadrupeds, cause an incessant uproar and confusion, inexpressibly disagreeable."[2]

Trade was also Henry Woodward's purpose. English goods for the skins of the whitetail deer that grazed the forests and swamps and savannas of the South in such vast numbers that in 1682 Thomas Ashe wrote, "There is such infinite Herds that the whole Country seems but one continued Park." For well over a century the beaver trade of the North and the Rocky Mountains had lured most historians and writers, attracted by its importance and romance, but in the South the pelts of beaver and other fur-bearing animals were hardly worth mentioning in comparison to the skins of the whitetail deer. For decades deer hides were by far the mainstay of the southern Indian trade and remained significant for most of the colonial period. Forty-five thousand deerskins a year were shipped from Charleston to London between 1699 and 1705, and from 1705 to 1715 the hide trade provided South Carolina's most valuable export. As late as 1747–1748, when the value of beaver pelts exported was 300 pounds, deerskin exports were second only to rice in total value: 252,000 pounds in South Carolina currency. To get a slice of that pie men were willing to risk life and limb, to connive and cajole, to participate in mayhem and massacre.[3]

Although this was a pioneering English effort to establish relations with the Creeks, and solicited by those powerful people, the Creeks were not unaccustomed to dealing with Europeans. Preceding Henry Woodward and his men by a century and a half, Spanish explorers and colonizers had traveled far and wide through the American South, and they had taught the Creeks and other Indians that the white man brought many things with him. He brought death, destruction, and disease, but also guns, and knives and hatchets made of hard metals, and woven cloth dyed with bright colors, and beads and baubles that delighted the eye. Thus they were tempted, and the temptations overcame their shock at the profound changes wrought by the invaders, and tempered their resistance to ways alien to theirs.

Hernando de Soto, conquistador, gave the ancestors of the Creeks and other interior tribes their first experience of Europeans. Brave, brutal, reckless, de Soto had fought under Pizarro in Peru and had profited from the fabulous treasures of the Incas. In May 1539, hoping to establish a colony of his own to rival Mexico and Peru, he began a fruitless quest for gold on the Gulf Coast of Florida that carried him northward through the present states of Georgia and South Carolina, across the Appalachians to the southeastern corner of Tennessee, then southwesterly through Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and a slice of Texas before turning back. It ended in May 1542 when his men lowered his fever-ravaged corpse into the Mississippi. Of his meandering three-year march we can say that he came, he saw, he went, for he was no Caesar. He found no treasure, he built no empires, he left no monuments. He wrought only death and destruction. Behind him, like the ocean erasing the wake of a ship, the great forests and the mist-shrouded mountains and the deep swamps healed and closed and in the fullness of

time showed no outward sign of his passing. His primary accomplishment was inadvertent: he softened up the tribes and left them terribly vulnerable to other waves of European and American invaders for the next three centuries.[4]

Spanish steel and Spanish fury were only part of the story. De Soto and other Europeans who preceded and followed him brought with them an invisible weapon far more terrible than Toledo blades wielded by conquistadors. European diseases to which the native peoples had no immunity felled Indians by the tens of thousands. Whole towns were wiped out, tribes decimated, survivors numbed by an experience beyond their ken. The pox was among them, and it would never go away, for this was a tale that would be repeated decade after dreary decade.

There is one more matter to consider before we leave de Soto and his six hundred Spaniards. They had marched and fought their way through thousands of miles of wilderness, surrounded for three years by thousands of brave and skillful warriors. Finally, desperate, their leader dead of fever and only half their number left, the survivors fought their way out and managed to escape. The Spanish adventurers considered their survival a gift from God. What a pity that the Indians lacked a written language, for it would be interesting to know to what they attributed their failure to overwhelm the Spaniards by sheer numbers and destroy them, leaving not a man to tell the tale.

Despite their violent reaction to the Spanish invasion, for the Creeks and their neighbors a dangerous attraction developed that was like a slow-working cancer within their societies. Having seen what wondrous results could come of being armed with guns, the Indians eagerly sought them from other Spaniards who appeared among them. And they would as eagerly seek them from the English, who arrived in South Carolina and founded Charleston in 1670, and from the French, who first established themselves on the Gulf Coast, on Biloxi Bay, in 1699.

It was the Creek desire for guns to protect themselves from the Westo Indians, who had procured theirs from English traders from Virginia, that prompted them to send a delegation to Charleston with an invitation to the English to come among them and trade. Thus was introduced into the very innards of their society a fifth column.[5] Unlike the twentieth-century version, it was not a figment of the imagination. The arrival of the English on the Chattahoochee was a watershed for the Creeks. Never again would things be the same.

The Spanish marched up from Pensacola and temporarily chased out the English. Henry Woodward, exhibiting supreme confidence—some would say arrogance—and a sense of humor, left a letter for the Spanish commander, Lieutenant Antonio Matheos: "I am very sorry that I came with so small a following that I cannot await your arrival. Be informed that I came to get acquainted with the country, its mountains, the seacoast, and Apalache. I trust in God that I shall meet you gentlemen later when I have a large following. September 2, 1685."[6]

"WE ARE FAR FROM ACKNOWLEDGING THAT FLORIDA BELONGS TO THE KING OF SPAIN"

Other Englishmen fanned out from Charleston to "get acquainted with the country" and trade with the Indians. By the early 1690s British traders were among the Upper Creeks in present-day Alabama, and in 1698 Thomas Welch actually crossed the Mississippi and established a trading post in the Quapaw Indian village at the mouth of the Arkansas River. Spanish and French officials reported the presence of English traders throughout the interior, diverting the Indian trade to Charleston, subverting attachments the Indians might have to the Spanish and French. Next to the giants of Spanish and French exploration—the de Sotos, the Ponce de Leons, the LaSalles—these largely anonymous Englishmen remain unheralded and for the most part forgotten. But they sowed deeper. They were especially successful among the Chickasaws, who lived in present-day northern Mississippi and western Tennessee. It was a relatively small tribe, but it occupied a strategic location on the Mississippi River, and its warriors had a deserved reputation for valor. Almost a century later they would continue to play an important role on the American frontier. The preeminent historian of that period of English expansion stated that the alliance the traders forged with the Chickasaws "more than any other single factor, was destined to thwart the complete attainment of the French design in the lower Mississippi Valley."[7]

The greatest of those early frontiersmen was a Scot, Thomas Nairne (?–1715). He was South Carolina's first Indian agent, appointed in 1707 to bring order and regularity to an enterprise increasingly known for abuse of the Indians by rough and crooked traders. He did not succeed in this endeavor, and the injustices of the Indian trade would remain to bedevil throughout its long and sordid history British colonial and U.S. officials alike. But Nairne was a very competent man, an acute observer whose *Journals* are a treasure trove for historians and anthropologists, and a visionary who planned for the expulsion of the Spanish and French and the creation of a vast British empire in what became the southeastern United States.[8]

The Spanish were a familiar threat, not just to English ambitions but to the young colony of South Carolina itself. It has been suggested, however, that the French were never more than a nuisance. This may be true. But we must be concerned with what contemporaries thought. In 1699, the year the French built Fort Maurepas on Biloxi Bay, the surveyor general of His Majesty's Customs for North America, Edward Randolph, wrote to the Board of Trade during an official visit to Charleston, "I find the Inhabitants greatly alarmed upon the news that the French continue their resolution to make a settling at Messasipi River, from [whence] they may come over land to the head of the Ashley River without opposition. . . ." Randolph wrote on the eve of the outbreak of the War of Spanish Succession (1701–1714; Queen Anne's War in the colonies), a war everyone knew was coming as soon as the childless Charles II of Spain died, which was anticipated on an almost daily basis and occurred on 1 November 1700.[9]

Governor James Moore of South Carolina also feared a French invasion, warning the assembly in August 1701 that whether "warr or peace we are sure to be always in danger and under the trouble and charge of keeping out guards, even in time of Peace, so long as those French live so near to us. To put you in mind of the French of Canada's neighborhood to the inhabitants of New England is to say enough on the subject."[10]

The key to control of the Gulf Coast, the Mississippi, and the vast hinterland was to get the powerful Indian nations on your side: Yamasees, Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, and, until their destruction by the French (1729–1731), Natchez. Thomas Nairne observed that England's Indian allies were "hardy, active, and good Marksmen, excellent at Ambuscade, and who are brought together with little or no Charge." The security of South Carolina, he wrote, could only be effected by "drawing over to our Side, or destroying, all the *Indians* within 700 miles of *Charlestown*." By the beginning of Queen Anne's War the English influence was strong among all except the Choctaws, who leaned to the French at Mobile. The Chickasaws made unsafe the passage of French convoys on the Mississippi between Canada and Louisiana. Thomas Nairne considered the "Cherikee nation now Entirely Subject to us are extremely well Scituate to Keep of any Incursions which Either the Illinois or any other french Indians may think of making into Carolina . . . they are now our only defence on the Back parts." This English effort to draw to them as allies as many tribes as possible to oppose the Spanish, the French, and especially the Indian allies of each was not a unique strategy in world history. Undoubtedly without knowing it, Nairne was adapting for British North America the classical imperial Chinese policy of using barbarians to fight barbarians.[11]

The most dramatic English action was taken against the Spanish, and it brings into sharp focus the crucial need of Indian allies in this early period and beyond. It also highlights the English attitude toward Spanish control of Florida, perhaps best expressed in 1730 by the Board of Trade in London: "We are far from acknowledging that Florida belongs to the King of Spain."[12]

By 1686 the English had all but driven the Spanish from Guale (present-day Georgia). The outbreak of Queen Anne's War was all South Carolina needed to launch a massive attack on the land the Spanish called La Florida. Between 1702 and 1706, James Moore of South Carolina, first as governor and later leading a private army sanctioned by the assembly, launched a series of devastating attacks. He was joined by Creeks and Yamasees as well as large numbers of Spanish mission Indians who had begun rejecting Christianity and Spanish hegemony before the interference of the English. The town of St. Augustine was destroyed, although the stone fort of San Marcos and its garrison and refugees survived. But the countryside was devastated by Moore's army of slave hunters, of whom there were fifty Englishmen and a thousand Creek warriors.

But inciting Indians to join in war was one thing, controlling them quite another. The horror of the destruction of the missions as recorded in

Spanish documents rings down over the centuries. Friars were tortured to death. Loyal mission Indians were not exempt from massacre. A Spanish reconnaissance patrol "found many burned bodies and . . . some women pierced by sticks and half roasted, many children impaled on poles, and others killed with arrows, their arms and legs cut off." At the fortified ranch of La Chua, Creek warriors quartered a black ranch hand. Almost all of the mission Indians from the town of Ivitachuco and their chief, the acculturated and literate Patricio de Hinachuba, were massacred by Creeks and renegade Apalachees within sight of the walls of St. Augustine. Many Spaniards and their Indian allies were skinned alive. Their tormentors "put them in stocks and there cut off the scalps from the heads, and the breasts from the women, and dried them on some long sticks. . . ." After a battle lost by the Spanish, the Indians took hold of one Balthazar Francisco, who "cried out to call on God and to Our Lady . . . spoke with an able tongue to the Indians, as he knew them well as an old soldier, who had been more than fourteen years in garrison in Apalachee; and that he wished it recorded, he heard him say, that he was from the Island of Teneriffe, of the region of Los Silos." The Indians honored Balthazar Francisco by giving him a "crown [of] the beaks of parroquets, deer hair, and wild animal hair, such as are much used in the dances which the pagans have for *tascayas* or *norocos,* names which are given to the courageous Indians"; and then they "cut out his tongue and eyes, cut off his ears, slashed him all over, stuck burning splinters in the wounds, and set fire to him while he was tied at the foot of a cross."[13]

On 16 April 1704 James Moore wrote to the Lords Proprietors in England that he had "killed, and taken as slaves 325 men, and have taken slaves 4,000 women and children."[14]

For Africans were not the only people enslaved in the colonies of the European powers. The Spanish enslaved thousands of Indians in the Caribbean. The French in Louisiana retaliated against the English and their allies by sending captured Chickasaws to the French West Indies for sale as slaves. And the Indians themselves did not emerge from the Indian slave trade with clean hands. English traders encouraged and rewarded Creek and Chickasaw warriors for capturing other Indians, who were transported to Charleston and sent in chains to New England and Barbados. The warriors took to it with enthusiasm. Thomas Nairne reported that "no imployment pleases the Chicasaws so well as slave Catching. A lucky hitt at that besides the Honor procures them a whole Estate at once, one slave brings a Gun, ammunition, horse, hatchet, and a suit of Cloathes, which would not be procured without much tedious toil a hunting." In this respect, the warriors matched the avaricious Charleston traders.[15]

Thomas Nairne was one of the slavers on the Moore expedition. He wrote to the earl of Sunderland in 1708, "The garrison of St. Augustine is by this warr, Reduced to the bare walls their Castle and Indian towns all Consumed Either by us in our Invasion . . . or by our Indian Subjects Since who in the quest of Booty are now obliged to goe down as farr on the point of Florida as the firm land will permit. They have drove the Floridians to the

Islands of the Cape, have brought in and sold many hundreds of them, and dayly now Continue that trade so that in some few years they'le Reduce these Barbarians to a farr less number." If the reader suspects Nairne of exaggerating, consider the fate of the once bold and prosperous Apalachee Indians, whose fierce resistance to de Soto in the winter of 1539–1540 kept the Spanish camp in a state of siege. They numbered about twenty-five thousand in the early 1600s, when Spanish missionaries began efforts to convert them. By the 1680s their numbers had been reduced to an estimated six thousand to ten thousand. The few who were left following the Anglo-Creek fury either took shelter at St. Augustine or went west to the relative safety of the Spanish and French garrison towns of Pensacola and Mobile. When Spain lost Florida to England in 1763, some of the remnants may eventually have ended up in Mexico in Vera Cruz; the rest went to Louisiana. By the 1830s history lost track of them. They disappeared as a people.[16]

From Apalachee to the Keys, from the stone walls of St. Augustine to lonely Pensacola, Creek and Yamasee war parties instigated by Englishmen roamed—killing, torturing, burning, pillaging, enslaving. The terror and devastation visited upon the friars and their Indian charges was unrelenting, and the wounds inflicted on the mission system, carefully built up over a century and a half, were mortal.

THE INDIANS "EFFECT THEM MOST WHO SELL BEST CHEAP"

Excessive pride now overcame the Creeks. Flushed with victory, they stormed Spanish Pensacola in 1707 and burned the town and did the same in October 1708, but on both occasions were unable to take the fort, and thereby revealed a chronic Indian military weakness: their inability stemming from both lack of technique and fighting style to take fortified places held by alert, determined defenders. In May 1709 they went after the French and besieged Mobile, where a "wild sortie by French soldiers repulsed them with loss." In 1711 the South Carolinian Colonel Theophillus Hastings led thirteen hundred Lower Creek warriors against the Choctaws.[17]

The English were also consumed with a pride barely discernible from arrogance, and the ones who felt it most were the Indians, especially their allies the Yamasees and the Creeks. The traders had long abused their clients, and the abuse was financial, mental, and physical: overpricing, cheating on weights and measures, extending credit until Indians were mired in debt from which they could not possibly escape, seizure of Indian property and the repossession of goods, holding relatives of the biggest debtors prisoners, actually beating Indians, and conniving with corrupt *micos,* whose daughters were often traders' wives or mistresses, with presents and favorable conditions of debt. By 1715 Indians owed the traders and merchants an approximate debt of £100,000 sterling ($9.2 million). To make matters worse, the Yamasee, whom South Carolina had enticed up from Florida to settle lands south of Charleston as a buffer against the Spanish, watched as a burgeoning white population began encroaching on the lands they had been given.[18]

Need the list be longer? Did the traders and settlers have any inkling that they were playing with fire?

Which is literally what occurred, on Good Friday, 15 April 1715. Rumors of an Indian conspiracy had filtered down-country. On 14 April Thomas Nairne, William Bray, and Samuel Warner met at the Yamasee town of Pocataligo to offer the Indians redress of grievances. The traders Bray and Warner were on an official mission. They had brought warnings to Charleston and had been sent to Pocataligo to head off a rising. Nairne had learned of the planned uprising independently and had come from his plantation on Saint Helena Island. They slept that night in Pocataligo. On Good Friday morning they were awakened by war cries and seized by warriors painted red and black. William Bray and Samuel Warner were killed immediately. But for Thomas Nairne the Yamasee reserved a special treatment, as befitted an important man who had won honors in war.

He was stripped and tied to a stake, probably with the customary thong that allowed him some freedom of movement. Splinters were stuck into his body and lighted. The Indians would have watched him closely. If he showed signs of fear, or begged for mercy, they would have laughed at him, for that was their way. A fire was built. Not a large fire. That would have ended his travail too quickly. For three days he was roasted "*à petit feu*" (a small fire). On the third day he died.[19]

The Yamasee War came close to destroying South Carolina. Four hundred settlers (6% of the population) were killed. Ninety percent of the traders were killed in the Yamasee and Creek Nations, from South Carolina's Low Country to central Alabama. Charleston's defensive perimeter was reduced to a radius of some thirty-five miles and that was not totally secure. In August 1715 several hundred warriors penetrated the outskirts of Charleston before being repulsed. The degree of danger can be measured by the arming of hundreds of black slaves to fight alongside white militiamen. All of the southeastern tribes had risen except two: the Chickasaws on the Mississippi, who stayed loyal and protected their traders; and the Cherokees, who were thinking over Creek overtures. The Chickasaws were too far away and too few to intervene. The Cherokees, however, were quite a different story. They were on the doorsteps of both Carolinas and they could muster 4,000 warriors. If the Cherokees joined the alliance, what could follow? The evacuation of Charleston?[20]

In the late fall of 1715 Colonels James Moore and George Chicken with 300 militiamen were sent up-country to the lower Cherokee towns as a show of force and to negotiate an alliance. At the same time Creek envoys were in the towns seeking their own alliance, and a large force of Creek warriors were concealed in the forests awaiting the signal for a Cherokee-Creek attack on the English force. The Cherokees took their time and negotiated with both sides. Finally, in January 1716, they made their decision. The Creek envoys were murdered by their hosts and a Cherokee-English force did the attacking and sent the waiting Creek warriors fleeing for their lives.[21]

The Cherokee decision saved South Carolina. Historians have given pride of place to the Indian alliances that led to the Pequot War (1636–1638) and King Philip's War (1675–1676) in New England, and the rising of the northwestern tribes in Pontiac's Rebellion (1763–1765). This is not unusual, given the general neglect of southern history during the colonial and revolutionary periods. But the alliance that led to the Yamasee War was the "greatest Indian alliance in colonial history with the potential to eradicate not just South Carolina but also North Carolina and Virginia." The failure of all of the southern tribes to unite against the invader at this favorable moment is striking, and we should keep it in mind as we arrive at various junctions in our story.[22]

As the English got the upper hand, an Anglican clergyman writing from South Carolina described the situation. "It is certain Many of the Yammonses and Creek Indians were against the war all along; But our Military Men are so bent upon Revenge, and so desirous to enrich themselves by making all the Indians Slaves that fall into their hands, but such as they kill (without making the least distinction between the guilty and the innocent, and without considering the Barbarous usage these poor Savages met from our villainous Traders) that it is in vain to represent to them the Cruelty and injustice of Such a procedure. And therefore all that we can doe is, to lament in Secret those Sins, which have brought this Judgement upon us; for what we Say out of the pulpit, are words of course, and are little minded, nowithstanding the general calamity."[23]

Johnston's final sentence, admitting clerical helplessness in a sea of striving and money grubbing, speaks volumes for the difference between England and its rivals in the great struggle for empire. Spain would cling to Florida for several decades. France took advantage of South Carolina's desperate situation during the Yamasee War. In 1717, at the invitation of the Alabama Indians, a people of the Creek Confederacy, the French built Fort Toulouse as a trading and listening post on the Coosa River in the heart of the Upper Creek country, near where the Coosa joins the Tallapoosa just north of modern Montgomery to form the Alabama. They would remain for almost half a century.[24] Spain, weakened but still to be reckoned with, and France to a greater extent, were continually in the minds of British ministers, colonial officials, merchants, and traders. But we know that even when the contest began a sea change in history promised England the upper hand. Thomas Nairne put his finger on it in 1708 in his *Memorial* to the earl of Sunderland: "May it Please Your Lordship the English trade for Cloath always atracts and maintains the obedience and friendship of the Indians. They Effect them most who sell best cheap."[25]

England had entered the modern world. Spain had not. And when France entered the fray in the South at the end of the seventeenth century, that absolutist monarchy also found itself hobbled by an archaic economic system. Let us not delude ourselves. Spain and France remained strong contenders, served by loyal, sometimes gifted, colonial soldiers and governors, and legions of fearless priests. But this ruthless contest for empire turned not

on the salvation of souls but the creation of wealth. In manufacturing, banking, and the ease with which her system produced cheap high-quality goods and extended credit to merchant adventurers, England left her continental rivals in the dust. Added to her superior system of economic organization was the nature of the men behind it and those who served them in the field. They were the English counterparts of the conquistador Hernando de Soto, whether in the counting houses of London and Charleston or plunging alone and ever deeper into the wilderness, dependent always for life itself on the loyalty and good nature of their Indian hosts. Hard, often intrepid men on the make, they differed from de Soto in at least one crucial respect. They were heralds of the modern world.[26]

"THEY COULD NOT LIVE WITHOUT THE ENGLISH"

The upheaval of the war brought a dramatic change in Creek diplomacy. The war and its aftermath taught them that all eggs should not be placed in a single basket. Words written several decades later by a knowledgeable British observer applied to the Creeks: "No people in the World understand and pursue their true National Interest, better than the Indians." Under the wise and skillful leadership of Old Brims of the Lower Creeks, neutrality toward the English, the Spanish, and the French became policy throughout the rest of the colonial period. Among the Upper Creeks, the Alabamas clearly explained their policy to a French officer, Lieutenant François Hazeur, who reported in 1740 that "they had long held as a maxim not to meddle at all in the quarrels that the Europeans had among themselves; that they had profited by it, since by means of this policy they were well received by all and received benefits from all sides." Given the nature of the Creek Confederacy, which we will discuss later in the narrative, neutrality had its detractors and was not always followed, and hot-blooded young warriors were not above going off on their own in quest of scalps and glory. But it was the starting point for policy discussions in council. Finely attuned to their own interests, the Creeks would promise the English this, the Spanish that, the French something else, play one against the other, strive mightily to get the most they could from each. Imperfect and messy, as human affairs are, the neutrality policy nevertheless served the Creeks well.[27]

But the deerskin trade remained, and it continued as a serious problem in relations between the English and the Indians, especially the Creeks and the Cherokees. Both sides were wed to it—the English for profit, the Indians because the English had what they craved and needed, for they had either forgotten or abandoned the old ways. The Indians knew it and admitted it, on more than one occasion with brutal candor. In 1725, Colonel George Chicken, South Carolina's Indian commissioner, reported from the Cherokee town of Tunisee that the "head Warriour . . . got up and made the following Speech to me and the People of the Town. 'That they must now mind and Consider that all their Old men were gone, and that they have been brought up after another Manner than their forefathers and that they

must Consider that they could not live without the English.'" Forty-one years later two Creek headmen, Ishenphoaphe and Escochabey, implored Governor James Wright of Georgia not to embargo the trade for the killing of a trader by a Creek warrior: "for we are so used to the white people and their clothing that we should be very poor without them."

White testimony on Indian addiction to trade was given by the British commander in chief in America, General Thomas Gage: "Our Manufactures are as much desired by the Indians, as their Peltry is sought for by us; what was originally deemed a Superfluity or a Luxury to the Natives is now become a Necessary; they are disused to the Bow, and can neither hunt nor make war, without Fire-Arms, Powder, and Lead. The British Provinces only can Supply them with their Necessarys; which they know, and for their own Sakes they would protect the Trade; which they actually do at present."[28]

The separate provinces attempted to control the trade and curb the excesses of the traders, but hundreds of miles of rugged Back Country in an age of primitive communications separated well-meaning provincial officials and "refractory and insolent traders," in the words of South Carolina governor Francis Nicholson. It took many months for transgressions to come to light, many more until judgments were rendered, and, in the absence of adequate enforcement, traders could usually ignore official findings and orders with impunity. In 1723, Governor Nicholson admitted that the attitude of the powerful, well-connected Charleston merchants who controlled the trade and profited most from it was the crucial factor in the problem: "the Various interests of the Persons concerned in the . . . Trade makes it very Difficult to Manage it." In this short but telling admission we glimpse early on the deep-rooted American preference for unfettered private enterprise.[29]

But efforts continued to be made to exert imperial control over the trade. In 1755, a South Carolinian submitted a report and a plan to the Board of Trade in London that shed much light on frontier conditions. Edmund Atkin (1707–1761), himself a successful Charleston merchant in the Indian trade, was tactless, quarrelsome, pompous, arrogant, and inept. And he did not play favorites, angering whites and Indians alike. One incident highlights the personal danger of operating in Indian country, the volatile atmosphere that always lurked beneath the surface when whites and Indians met, and the damage that could be done by offensive deportment or ill-chosen words. It was described by the trader James Adair, on one occasion while in council in the Upper Creek town of Tuckabatchee, which was located in present-day Elmore County, Alabama, northeast of modern Montgomery. Atkin so enraged the Creek warrior Tobacco Eater, "who had always before been very kind to the British traders," that Tobacco Eater "jumped up in a rage, and darted his tomahawk at his head." The blade hit a beam as it came down and struck Atkin only a glancing blow. But blood spurted, and pandemonium ensued. Traders fearing all would be massacred fled in every direction. But several Creeks friendly to the English sprang upon Tobacco Eater and threw him to the ground and bound him. Thus, Adair wrote, was "prevented those dangerous consequences which must otherwise have immediately followed.

Had the aimed blow succeeded, the savages would have immediately put up the war and death whoop, destroyed most of the white people there on the spot, and set off in great bodies, both to the Cherakee country, and against our valuable settlements."[30]

Yet Atkin was intelligent, well educated, and a good observer. And unlike many, if not most, of his fellow merchants, he believed strongly that central control and regulation of the Indian trade was necessary if England was to best France in the momentous war for North America then being waged. His general approach was neither unique nor new to the authorities in London. Various proposals by well-known colonials had been submitted to the Board of Trade during the early 1750s. But his plan, wrote the historian Wilbur Jacobs, "was truly the first comprehensive, well-organized design for Indian management submitted to British authorities."[31]

Atkin divided the colonies into northern and southern departments, with a superintendent of Indian affairs for each. The northern superintendency would be filled by the famous and very able Anglo Irishman Sir William Johnson, whose main responsibility would be the powerful Iroquois Confederacy of central and western New York, among whom he lived, married, and begot children. His baronial home, Johnson Hall, still stands in the Mohawk Valley. Atkin was made superintendent of the Southern Department, in which he served from his appointment in 1756 until his death in October 1761.

A PEOPLE "LAWLESS AND LICENTIOUS"

The new organization, however, was living on borrowed time. Mass migration to America had begun well before Edmund Atkin made his proposal and would continue after his death. It would accelerate a process that had begun with the first landings of English colonists on the Atlantic Coast of North America early in the seventeenth century, in Virginia and Massachusetts. The reader may question my use of the term *mass migration,* for Americans associate its beginning with the flight of the Celtic Irish from the Great Famine of the mid-nineteenth century. But mass migration actually began in the early eighteenth century and steadily rose in volume until the American Revolution temporarily shut off the flow. Unlike the mass movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it numbered in hundreds of thousands instead of millions. But in a century of low population levels, especially in North America, the eighteenth-century migrants came in big numbers and took literally the biblical command to be fruitful and multiply. They were mostly Scotch Irish and German Protestants. Among them were smaller groups of Welsh and French Protestants. Thousands of them and their descendants headed for the southern frontier in search of cheap land, joined by English and Scotch Irish settlers pushing out of the southern Piedmont from Maryland to Georgia. In this book the frontier-bound folk are our concern.[32]

The Long Hunters, ca. 1810, by unknown artist (Courtesy of the East Tennessee Historical Society, Knoxville)

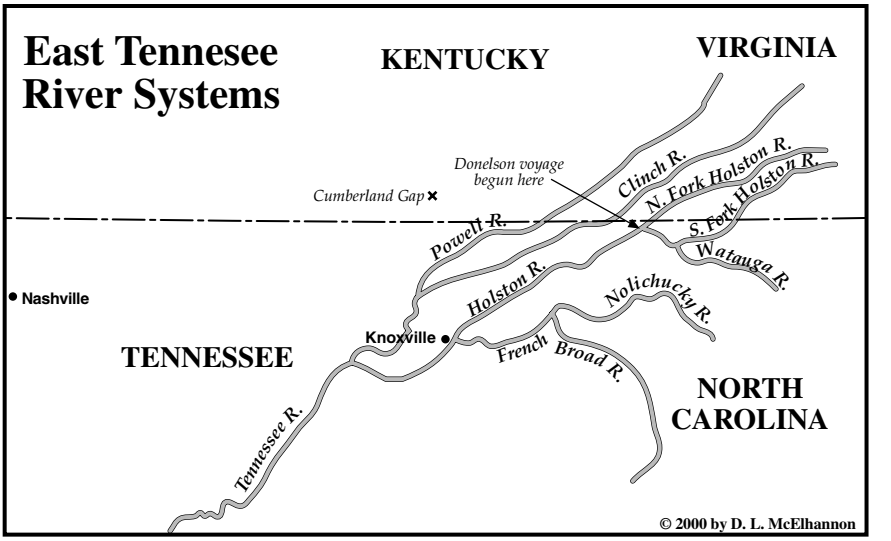
They swarmed. From the north, out of Pennsylvania, from the east, out of the Piedmont, down the Great Valley of Virginia, the beautiful and fertile Shenandoah, pressing into the mountain valleys of southwestern Virginia, slipping sideways and descending into the Back Country of the Carolinas and Georgia, a trickle, then a flood of settlers appeared. They sought land and opportunity, and they had something in common with the great movements of peoples of past ages in Asia, Europe, and the Americas: they were not concerned at whose expense they attained their goals. They were for the most part poor but not rabble, contrary to the deep-seated prejudices of their alleged betters, such as General Thomas Gage, who described them as "lawless and Licentious. . . ."[33]

It was these aggressive, pressing people, not traders, who represented the great threat to the Indian owners of the land. Many traders and their packhorsemen and other employees were crude, greedy, crooked, violent, and sexual predators. Bernard Romans, an eighteenth-century naturalist and cartographer, knew them well and did not mince words in describing them: "monsters in human form, the very scum and outcast of the earth . . . with . . . an inclination for deceit and over reaching. . . ." Their behavior at times drove Indians to violence, as in the Yamasee War and later in Pontiac's Rebellion in the Northwest. But traders and Indians were satisfied with the general state of affairs. The traders had no desire to push the Indians off their land, for they had a solid stake in the status quo. Their living revolved around the white-tailed deer, whose numbers by the time our tale begins were

dwindling from heavy hunting and the increasing presence of settlers. Traders had no desire to see hordes of settlers squat on Indian land, kill off the game, and goad the Indians to war. Traders had from the beginning changed the Indian world, but they had not supplanted it and had no wish to do so. Nor did the Indians wish to see the permanent departure of the traders, who supplied their avid desire for European goods. The coming of the settlers, however, and their unceasing flow changed the equation forever.[34]

The French and Indian War (1754–1763) further imperiled the situation of the Indians by driving France from North America. In general the French have never been a nation of migrants, thus they did not represent a threat to Indian occupancy of the land or their way of life. The British, however, not only migrated—they opened the doors to others, especially Germans. Under the terms of the peace treaty England took Canada and all of the lands claimed by France west of the Appalachians to the Mississippi River, and from Spain all of Florida. New Orleans went to Spain. The Indians vigorously objected to the transfer. "We tell you now the French never conquered us neither did they purchase a foot of our Country, nor have they a right to give it to you, we gave them liberty to settle for which they always rewarded us & treated us with great Civility while they had it in their power, but as they are become now your people, if you expect to keep these Posts, we will expect to have proper returns from you."[35]

The British ignored the warning. Yet at the same time they wanted to avoid conflict with the Indians and arrange an orderly administration of new territories. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was designed to do just that by, among other things, fixing a line that ran from the "heads or sources of any of the rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West or northwest. . . ." In the South the line ran along the crest of the Appalachian Mountains. Beyond the line, where the waters ran west, settlers and speculators were forbidden to go. That was Indian country, "reserved to them . . . as their hunting grounds," by the Crown. Private purchases of Indian lands were also forbidden. Only the Crown could accept cessions or purchase land from the Indians. Only the Crown could grant "special leave and license" for "purchases or settlements. . . ." The British government did not regard the line as permanent. But "for the present, and until our further pleasure be known," it was meant to regulate future expansion and to keep Indian relations firmly in control of the government. To British colonists the proclamation was regarded with hostility and disdain. George Washington, then actively engaged in land speculation, described the Proclamation Line of 1763 as a "temporary expedient to quiet the minds of the Indians." Speculators and humbler citizens ignored it. For this was America, where age-old obedience to authority was crumbling, where anything was possible for those who dared, where the king in London was far away, where British soldiers and officials were stretched too thin to consistently enforce royal decrees, where juries of friends and neighbors were quite ready to acquit transgressors against Indians.[36]



East Tennessee River Systems

"DRAGGING CANOE TOLD THEM IT WAS THE BLOODY GROUND"

At least as early as 1768 a few pioneers from Virginia and North Carolina were pushing into what is today the northeastern corner of the state of Tennessee, beyond the Proclamation Line. Then it was part of North Carolina, which claimed what is now Tennessee all the way to the Mississippi River. Late that year a long hunter, Gilbert Christian, led a hunting party down the valley of the Holston River, which flows from the confluence of its north and south forks in northeastern Tennessee southward to unite with the French Broad River four and one-half miles above modern Knoxville. There the Holston and the French Broad form another river, which will become familiar to us as we follow the fortunes and misfortunes of pioneers and Indians—the Tennessee.[37] The hunters found three families at the Holston's headwaters. Upon their return in February 1769, Christian was astounded to come on several cabins some twenty to thirty miles northeast of modern Kingsport, Tennessee, on lands watered by the Watauga River, a tributary of the Holston. One belonged to William Bean, who had come over the mountains from Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Bean is called Tennessee's first white settler, which may or may not be true. But he was joined by several kinfolk and friends, which prompted a historian of Tennessee, Stanley J. Folmsbee, to write that "his work as a colonizer transcends in importance his alleged priority in time."[38]

The following year a man traveling alone came among them. His name was James Robertson (1742–1814) and he had come from east of the mountains looking for good land for his family and friends. Robertson was born

in Brunswick County, Virginia, the eldest son of Scotch Irish parents, John and Mary Gower Robertson. The family moved to Wake County, North Carolina, in James's youth. There James married Charlotte Reeves, with whom he was fruitful and multiplied to the number of eleven children. James and Charlotte Reeves Robertson were strong in body and character. Remember their names.

About 1766 James and Charlotte moved their family west to Orange County, North Carolina, and it was from there that James set out on his solo trek over the mountains. In August 1770, in the valley of the Watauga near modern Elizabethton, Tennessee, Robertson planted corn in an old Indian field before setting out for home, with the intention of returning with his party the following spring. He became lost in the mountains and probably would have died had he not met two hunters who gave him food and directions. The next year Roberton returned to the Watauga with Charlotte, their children, and several other families. James Roberston had become a colonizer, and he was not through with that work.

There were four settlements in the northeastern corner of Tennessee in the early 1770s. Only one, the North Holston Settlements, was outside Indian country. The pioneers in Carter's Valley west of the Holston, on the Watauga, and to the south in the Nolichucky Settlements on the Nolichucky River, a tributary of the Tennessee, were squatters on Cherokee land. Another settler of note was John Sevier (pronounced "severe"), who had come from New Market, Virginia, in the Shenandoah Valley. He eventually settled on the Nolichucky, whence his nickname, Chucky John. Much has been made of Sevier's French Huguenot ancestry, which came from his grandfather, a French Protestant who fled to England to escape religious persecution. In London he married an Englishwoman. In America Sevier's French-English father married Joanna Goad, and on her side Sevier was a fifth-generation American out of English stock. John Sevier (1745–1815) was a partisan chief of uncommon ability and a fierce political antagonist. Remember his name, too.[39]

The British agent for the Cherokees, Alexander Cameron, ordered the Watauga and Nolichucky settlers to abandon the land and leave Indian country. The Nolichucky settlers moved to Watauga, and there the combined groups defied the British government. James Robertson and John Bean visited the Overhill Cherokees at their principal town of Chota, south of Knoxville, and asked to lease the land. The famous Cherokee chief Attakullakulla knew the whites well. In 1730 he and other chiefs had made an official visit to London, where they met the king and became the toast of the town. Felix Walker, who saw Attakullakulla in council three years later, wrote that the name given him by whites, Little Carpenter, was an "allusion, say the Indians, to his deep, artful, and ingenious diplomatic abilities, ably demonstrated in negotiating treaties with white people, and influence in their national councils; like as a white carpenter would make every notch and joint fit in wood, so he could bring all his views to fill and fit their places in the political machinery of his nation. He was the most celebrated

and influential Indian among all the tribes then known; considered the Solon of his day. He was said to be about ninety years of age, a very small man, and so lean and light habited, that I scarcely believe he . . . exceeded" ninety pounds. "He was marked with two large scores or scars on each cheek, his ears cut and banded with silver, hanging nearly down on each shoulder, the ancient Indian mode of distinction in some tribes and fashion in others."[40]

Attakullakulla is reported to have said of Robertson's and Bean's request to lease the land, "It is but a little spot of ground you ask, and I am willing that your people should live upon it. I pity the white people. . . ." Whereupon the leader of the Nolichucky settlements, Jacob Brown, hearing of Attakullakulla's generosity, made the same request for the Nolichucky settlers, which was also granted. The foot, a little foot to be sure but still a foot, was in the door.[41]

Finding themselves outside the realm of any organized government, the Wataugans felt the need to create their own, and on 8 May 1772 signed "Written Articles of Association." The document was lost, but the Wataugans described their government as a court empowered to act as both a legislature and a judiciary, with a clerk, a sheriff, and other officials, to prevent the area from becoming a haven for debtors seeking "to defraud their creditors; considering also the necessity of recording Deeds, Wills, and doing other public business. . . ." James Robertson was probably one of the five members of the court. Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, was aghast when he learned of the Watauga Association, claiming that the Wataugans had "to all intents and purposes erected themselves into an inconsiderable yet a Separate State . . . it, at least, Sets a dangerous example to the people of America of forming governments distinct from and independent of His Majesty's Authority." Modern students of the affair disagree with Dunmore that the Wataugans meant to create an independent state. Their purpose was almost certainly an emergency measure taken for the simple reason that there was no law west of the Appalachians and they did not wish to live in a lawless state. They duly reported what they had done to royal authorities in North Carolina. Lord Dunmore, however, was certainly right in stating that they had set a "dangerous example." Theirs was a precedent for moving beyond legal boundaries, dealing directly with the Indians, and establishing, if only on a temporary basis, their own system of government without a by-your-leave of colonial authorities. Their "dangerous example" was a clear sign of the loosening of traditional chains of authority, which had been slowly building in American colonies, and of the truly radical nature of the American Revolution.[42]

There matters stood until the early spring of 1775. An uneasy peace had prevailed, punctuated by bursts of violence between whites and Indians. But a development was taking place that had vast repercussions in the Old Southwest. On 6 January 1775 Judge Richard Henderson of North Carolina and several associates formed the Transylvania Company and undertook to do what the proclamation of 1763 expressly forbade: purchase land privately

from the Indians without royal "leave or license." Where the Watauga sings over the rocks at Sycamore Shoals, at modern Elizabethton, Tennessee, about 1,200 Indians and 600 whites met in March 1775. James Robertson was there, and a surveyor named John Donelson, who had a daughter named Rachel. It is almost certain that during the conference Judge Henderson, James Robertson, and John Donelson discussed establishing a settlement deep in the western wilderness where the Cumberland River reaches farthest south before angling north toward the Ohio. For several days Henderson and others negotiated with Attakullakulla and other Cherokee chiefs. John Vann was the interpreter, but according to a man present "sundry Indian traders . . . were present at the Conferences, and that the Indians seemed to design them as a check upon Vann, in case he should not interpret their Talks justly. . . ."[43]

At first the Cherokees offered Henderson the lands north of the Kentucky River. Henderson refused. He wanted the lands south of that, the great swath of territory between the Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers. At this point a young Cherokee by the name of Dragging Canoe, a son of Attakullakulla, rose in council and denounced the proceedings, accusing the old chiefs of selling the Cherokee birthright. Their disappearance as a race would be the consequence. But the old chiefs persisted in their design, and on 19 March a private treaty was signed between the Transylvania Company and the Cherokees. That Indian land tenure did not recognize the concept of private property, that the chiefs could not sign away what was claimed in common by all Cherokees, was ignored, as it always was in treaty making between whites and Indians. For $10,000 in trade goods, Henderson had struck a deal for 20 million acres between the Kentucky and Cumberland Rivers.

Young Dragging Canoe, described by an early observer as "a large 6 feet slim Indian, good looking, a Keen Smart Chief," rose in council. He was in a fury at what his father and the other old men had done. A man who was there, Samuel Wilson, watched him and listened to his prophetic words: "the Dragging Canoe told them it was the Bloody Ground, and would be dark, and difficult to settle it."[44]

Sycamore Shoals was one of the most important treaties of the colonial era, but its effect awaited events occurring on the frontier and in far-off places. In Massachusetts a month later, on 19 April 1775, on Lexington Common the shot was fired heard 'round the world. The War of the American Revolution had begun.

The Wataugans and the settlers on the Nolichucky took advantage of the gathering at Sycamore Shoals to buy from the Cherokees their leased lands. But by the spring of 1776 the Cherokees had declared for England and demanded that the settlers vacate their lands. They were given forty days to comply. James Robertson and others appealed to North Carolina and Virginia for aid, but neither wanted to get involved in an Indian war while they had the British to deal with. Most of the settlers, however, made of stern stuff, cinched their belts and made ready to fight it out. They were also not

without guile. Their leaders, including James Robertson, had been corresponding with British Indian agent Alexander Cameron and the then deputy superintendent of Indian affairs in the Southern Department, Henry Stuart, brother of the superintendent, John Stuart, in an effort to buy time while they built forts at Sycamore Shoals and elsewhere. Henry Stuart had arrived in Chota from Mobile on 24 April 1776 with twenty-one packhorses loaded with five thousand pounds of powder and lead. It was escorted by Cherokee warriors under Dragging Canoe, who had gone to Mobile seeking just such a bonanza.[45]

Stuart and Cameron wrote to the Watauga and Nolichucky settlers, enclosing a demand from the chiefs that they evacuate their lands. The trader Isaac Thomas, who delivered the letter, later swore that American settlers told him that a Wataugan, Jesse Bean, had rewritten it to describe a joint British-Indian plan to attack the frontier and drive the settlers out. The homes of frontier Tories would be marked in order to spare them. The forgery was first sent to the Committee of Safety of Fincastle County, Virginia, then widely circulated, printed in the *Virginia Gazette,* creating a sensation all the way to Philadelphia and members of the Continental Congress. Rebellious Americans were quite ready to believe anything dastardly of the British, including collusion in unleashing the horrors of border war. Fincastle County's Committee of Safety now agreed to send help. But before it arrived the Indians struck. Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron urged the Cherokees to wait and act in concert with a British offensive, but they should have known better than to supply Indians with the wherewithal to make war and not expect them to put it to immediate use.

It seems that for the Cherokees the arrival in Chota of a delegation of fourteen Shawnees, Delawares, and Mohawks calling for combined action against the Americans decided the issue. The northerners were painted black, for war, and carried with them the war belt, nine feet long and six inches wide, made of purple wampum and covered with vermilion. In council a Shawnee offered the belt to Dragging Canoe, who took it, then passed it on to the Raven, who chanted the war song. One by one young warriors eager for battle against the invader took up the belt.

Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia: on every border Cherokee warriors carried the tomahawk, the scalping knife, the faggot, meting out death and destruction. Our concern, however, is with the small, vulnerable settlements on the cutting edge of the American frontier—on the Nolichucky, the Watauga, and the Holston. They got early warning from traders, who had received it from a famous Cherokee woman, Nancy Ward, a niece of Attakullakulla.

Three columns totaling 600 to 700 warriors moved north up the Great Valley of East Tennessee. Dragging Canoe led the center column against Eaton's Station near Long Island on the Holston, now in the neighborhood of Kingsport, Tennessee. Old Abram went after Nolichucky and Watauga. To the west the Raven struck into Carter's Valley, where the settlers were scattered and defenseless. Raven's column devastated the valley as the settlers fled

before the warriors. Cabins and crops were burned, livestock slaughtered, those who failed to get away fast enough killed and scalped. The Raven drove into Virginia as far as Seven Mile Ford on the South Fork of the Holston.

Scouts spotted Dragging Canoe's column making for Eaton's Station. The fighting men numbered about 170 and were commanded by six militia captains: James Thompson, who was senior and at least in nominal overall command, James Shelby, William Buchanan, John Campbell, William Cocke, and Thomas Madison. On the morning of 20 July 1776, it was decided to meet the warriors in the open. "We marched in two divisions," the captains reported, "with flankers on each side and scouts before." The scouts came on 20 warriors. Fire was exchanged. Then "our men rushed on them with such violence that they were obliged to make a precipitate retreat." Fearing that a large party of Indians might be nearby, they decided to return to the fort, but they had gone only about a mile when Dragging Canoe and his main force, "not inferior to ours, attacked us in the rear. Our men sustained the attack with great bravery and intrepidity, immediately forming a line. The Indians endeavoured to surround us, but were prevented by the uncommon fortitude and vigilance of Captain James Shelby, who took possession of an eminence that prevented their design. Our line of battle extended about a quarter of a mile. We killed about thirteen on the spot, whom we found. . . . There were streams of blood every way, and it was generally thought there was never so much execution done in so short a time on the frontiers." It is said that Dragging Canoe himself was shot in the leg and suffered a broken thigh. Thus ended the Battle of Island Flats, a skirmish really, but important nonetheless.[46]

The following day, 21 July, Old Abram's warriors fiercely assaulted Fort Caswell on the Watauga, Colonel John Carter commanding. With him were Captain James Robertson and Lieutenant John Sevier. The latter had evacuated Fort Lee on the Nolichucky and brought his men and their families to Fort Caswell. Seventy-five fighting men defended the walls.

Old Abram's initial assault failed and he settled into a siege, firing now and then at the fort. About 25 warriors attempting to fire the stockade scattered when James Robertson's sister Ann carried a bucket of boiling wash water to the parapet and poured it on the attackers. Although wounded, she kept it up until the warriors retreated. After about two weeks the siege was lifted. Despite almost two centuries of experience fighting the white man, Indians had not yet learned how to take forts held by determined, well-led garrisons. Their only weapons were ruse and starvation. The Cherokee offensive was a failure. Only Carter's Valley had been cleared of whites, but they would come back, they always did, time after bloody time.

The Americans did not wait long to strike back. In a remarkable example of cooperation, Virginia and the Carolinas staged an offensive against the Cherokees that devastated their country. From South Carolina, from North Carolina, from Virginia, militia columns struck deep into Cherokee country, burning and pillaging towns, storehouses, and crops. No memorable battles

were fought, only hopeless skirmishes, for the forces arrayed against them were too formidable for the Cherokees to resist. The earth was scorched. The Virginia column alone, Colonel William Christian commanding, reported that the Indians had left behind "horses, cattle, dogs, hogs, and fowl," and "between forty and fifty thousand bushels of corn and ten or fifteen thousand bushels of Potatoes." The Cherokees, largely a mountain people, were left to face winter without lodges or food. The overwhelming defeat of the Cherokees so discouraged their neighbors to the south, the Creeks, that for the most part they offered little military assistance to the British during the Revolutionary War. The Cherokees were knocked out of the war for six years, and when they rose again a similar campaign, quick and ruthless, by the gifted South Carolina partisan chief Andrew Pickens soon put an end to it.[47]

Dragging Canoe and his followers, however, remained intransigent. In March 1777, he withdrew from the Cherokee Nation with some 500 warriors and their families and settled on Chickamauga Creek, just north of modern Chattanooga, Tennessee. He taunted those who had lost their will to resist as Virginians. He called his people Ani-Yun'wiya—the Real People. The whites called them Chickamauga, a name that would soon command fear and respect.

The smashing American victory in the Cherokee War, both the successful resistance on the Watauga and the Holston and the crushing offensive by the three states, was prelude for further advances by restless American frontier folk. Even as full-scale war was waged by Americans and Britons east of the mountains, frontiersmen pushed out into hostile territory first to reconnoiter, then bringing families to settle. But Indian resistance had not ended. Chickamaugas and Creeks from the south, Chickasaws from the west, Shawnees from the north would bitterly contest the white advance for decades to come—valley by bloody valley. Out of the countless, long-forgotten clashes that took place, which in our time would be described as "incidents," let us look at one that occurred three years before Andrew Jackson's arrival on the frontier, as an example of a not untypical "incident" that reveals the grit and determination of the People of the Western Waters.